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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most gracious Father, remind us that we never drift out of Your love and care. Faces may change, and conditions may alter, but You are always there just when we need You most. Thank You for protecting us from seen and unseen dangers, for being our refuge and strength.

Today, lead our Senators to do Your will. May their actions spring from thoughts that are pure, just, true, honest, and good.

And, Lord, we pray for the earthquake victims in Syria and Turkey.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, February 7, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable PETER WELCH, a Senator from the State of Vermont, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. WELCH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

### MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 259

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first a little housekeeping business, and then we will get to the statement.

First, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 259) to ensure transparent and competitive transportation fuel markets in order to protect consumers from unwarranted price increases.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar, under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

### TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I want to begin by offering my prayers to everyone affected by the devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Over 6,000 have been reported dead. It is just awful—awful. You see the pictures, and you ache. We stand ready to help however we can.

### STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Tonight, President Biden will come before a joint session of Congress and deliver his State of the Union to the American people. It is a chance for all of us to hear directly from the Commander in Chief about the tremendous progress we have made as a nation, the challenges we have overcome in recent years, and how Democrats are keeping our promises to make the lives of the American people better.

I expect the President will make the case clearly and convincingly that today the United States is far better off than it was a year ago. Inflation is coming down; wages are going up; gas prices have eased at last; unemployment is near record lows; and the pandemic, after causing so much suffering, so much destruction, no longer dominates our lives. Our work is not finished, but today we can confidently say America is headed in the right direction thanks to President Biden's leadership and thanks to the work of a strong, unified Democratic Party in Congress.

As Americans listen to President Biden, I am confident they will see the glaring contrast between Democratic unity on the one hand and Republican chaos on the other. Democrats remain laser-focused on delivering our people-first agenda. Every bill Democrats passed last Congress was written with average Americans in mind, from the American Rescue Plan to the infrastructure bill, to the Inflation Reduction Act, to gun safety, marriage equality, and so, so much more.

Let's just take one example out of many. It is an important example but just one. Senate Democrats worked very hard to deliver a \$35 insulin cap for every American on Medicare, but, of course, we want to go further. We tried to get it for everybody before reconciliation, but the reconciliation bill only allowed us to pass, in the IRA, an insulin cap for some Americans. When

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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